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| 89TH CONGRESS <i>1st Session</i> | } | SENATE | { | REPORT No. 190 |
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PERSECUTION OF PERSONS BY SOVIET RUSSIA

MAY 14, 1965.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. SPARKMAN, from the Committee on Foreign Relations,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. Con. Res. 17]

The Committee on Foreign Relations, having had under consideration the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 17) to express the sense of Congress against the persecution of persons by Soviet Russia because of their religion, reports the same favorably with amendments and recommends that as amended the resolution be agreed to by the Senate.

PURPOSE

The purpose is stated in the resolving clause which states the sense of Congress "that persecution of any persons because of their religion by the Soviet Union be condemned, and that the Soviet Union in the name of decency and humanity be urged to cease executing persons for alleged economic offenses and to permit fully the free exercise of religion and the pursuit of culture by Jews and all others within its borders."

BACKGROUND

Senate Concurrent Resolution 17 was introduced by Senator Ribicoff on February 2 and is cosponsored by the following 70 Members of the Senate: Mr. Allott, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. Bayh, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Bible, Mr. Boggs, Mr. Brewster, Mr. Burdick, Mr. Byrd of Virginia, Mr. Byrd of West Virginia, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Case, Mr. Clark, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Dodd, Mr. Dominick, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Fannin, Mr. Fong, Mr. Gruening, Mr. Hart, Mr. Hartke, Mr. Holland, Mr. Hruska, Mr. Inouye, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Javits, Mr. Kennedy of Massachusetts, Mr. Kennedy of New York, Mr. Kuchel, Mr. Lausche, Mr. Long of Missouri, Mr. Magnuson, Mr. McCarthy, Mr. McClellan, Mr. McGee, Mr. McGovern, Mr. McIntyre, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Metcalf, Mr. Miller, Mr. Mondale, Mr. Monroney, Mr. Montoya,

Mr. Morse, Mr. Morton, Mr. Moss, Mr. Mundt, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Muskie, Mr. Nelson, Mrs. Neuberger, Mr. Pastore, Mr. Pearson, Mr. Pell, Mr. Prouty, Mr. Proxmire, Mr. Randolph, Mr. Saltonstall, Mr. Scott, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Smathers, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Symington, Mr. Thurmond, Mr. Tower, Mr. Tydings, Mr. Williams of New Jersey, Mr. Yarborough, and Mr. Young of Ohio.

As introduced, Senate Concurrent Resolution 17 was identical to Senate Resolution 204 of the 88th Congress, which was the subject of committee hearings on August 10, 1964. At that time it was endorsed by Senators Ribicoff, Javits, Keating, Dodd, and Scott. Roy Millenson, national representative of the American Jewish Committee, and with drafting changes by Garland Evans Hopkins of the Continuing Committee on Muslim-Christian Cooperation.

Subsequently, Senator Ribicoff offered the text of Senate Resolution 204 as an amendment (No. 1218) to H.R. 11380, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1964, and it was agreed to on September 24, 1964, by a vote of 60 to 1. The House version of H.R. 11380 did not contain similar language and in conference substitute language of a more general nature was agreed to.

The Committee on Foreign Relations considered Senate Concurrent Resolution 17 in executive session on May 5, 10, and 14, 1965, and ordered it reported favorably with amendments on the latter date.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH COMMENTS

While the Department of State in 1964 recommended against favorable action on Senate Resolution 204, it does not now object to passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 17 in its letter which follows:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, D.C., April 6, 1965.

Hon. J. W. FULBRIGHT,
*Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter of February 8, requesting the Department's comments on Senate Concurrent Resolution 17, which expresses the sense of the Congress that the Soviet Government's persecution of persons because of their religion be condemned, that the Soviet Government cease executing persons for alleged economic offenses, and that it permit the free exercise of religion and cultural pursuits by Jews and all other persons living in the Soviet Union.

The Department shares the concern of the sponsors of this resolution for the Soviet Government's persecution of people because of their religion and for the plight of the Soviet Jewish community. As Secretary Rusk said in a speech of April 30, 1964: "I would add my assurance that American leaders at the highest levels are aware of the problems of Soviet Jewry and that Soviet leaders are aware of our concern." On the basis of reports from our Embassy in Moscow, of studies prepared within the Government, and of a wealth of material which private American organizations have given to the Department, the Department has found that Jews in the U.S.S.R. suffer not only from the severe restrictions imposed by the Soviet Government on all religions, but also from additional restrictions which make it impossible for them to enjoy their cultural and community life. We

PERSECUTION OF PERSONS BY SOVIET RUSSIA

3

have found that the Soviet Jews, although classified in many instances by the Soviet Government as a "nationality," do not have the same rights as other "nationalities" such as the Ukrainians, Armenians, or Tadzhiks. Furthermore, Jews on a number of occasions have been singled out in accounts of Soviet citizens executed for economic crimes.

The Department has encouraged the many Americans who have expressed their concern to us over this matter to make the facts of the situation and their concern a matter of public record. As Assistant Secretary of State Harlan Cleveland said in a speech on this subject on April 30, 1964: "Let no one believe that this is a pointless exercise, unrelated to political reality. Under the klieg lights of world opinion, a nation's prestige is engaged; and since national power is not unrelated to national prestige, governments are influenced by world opinion—even though it is hard to prove because they seldom admit it." The Department has, through statements in the U.N. and in statements by the Secretary and other high officials of the Department, made its own effort to bring Soviet persecution of all religions and the plight of the Soviet Jewish community to the attention of world public opinion.

In a letter to you of April 17, 1964, the Department commented on an identical resolution which was sent to the Department for comment on September 27, 1963, and introduced in the Senate on September 24, 1964. At that time, the Department's considered opinion was that under circumstances then prevailing passage of the resolution would not offer a reasonable possibility of assisting the plight of Jews and other religious people in the Soviet Union. To the contrary, it was considered possible that passage of the resolution might be interpreted by Soviet authorities as an annoying intervention by a foreign government and could therefore lead those authorities to take the very kinds of actions against the Jewish people of the Soviet Union which we wish stopped. It was primarily for these considerations that the Department did not recommend the adoption of the resolution.

Whereas now, a year later, the Department still has no good reason to believe that the passage of a like resolution will have any significant beneficial result, there appears to be less likelihood that passage in itself would harm those we seek to help.

The Soviet Government appears to have become increasingly sensitive to the unfavorable publicity it has received in connection with the plight of Soviet Jews and may have moderated some of its policies accordingly. It at least has taken certain steps designed to reduce the unfavorable publicity. These steps, in a limited way, may assist Soviet Jews in their efforts to maintain their cultural and community life. They have included the withdrawal of a scurrilous anti-Semitic publication, publication of a few Yiddish books, revival on a limited basis of the Soviet Yiddish theater, and the establishment of two bakeries in Moscow for the baking of matzoh for passover in 1965.

The Department continues to encourage the efforts of private American citizens and organizations to bring the situation of the Soviet Jews to the attention of world opinion so as to bring the weight of this opinion to bear on Soviet authorities.

As it would appear that these private efforts by American citizens and organizations would receive useful and timely encouragement also from the passage of a resolution expressing the concern of the Congress, the Department has weighed this advantage against possible

4

PERSECUTION OF PERSONS BY SOVIET RUSSIA

disadvantages and has decided on balance that under present circumstances it does not object to the passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 17.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that from the standpoint of the administration's program there is no objection to the submission of this report.

Sincerely yours,

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR II,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

The Central Intelligence Agency made similar comments on the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union.

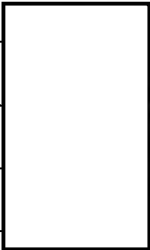


COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Religious persecution by the Soviet and satellite nations has been the subject of concern in the Congress in the past and has always been strongly condemned, as it was last in 1964.

As the preamble states there is abundant evidence that Jewish citizens have been singled out for extreme punishment for alleged economic offenses by various means. It is the hope of the committee that reporting Senate Concurrent Resolution 17 with amendments and focusing public attention on this situation will result in an improvement of these conditions.

More than two-thirds of the Senate have already joined in endorsing this resolution. The committee hopes that the Senate will agree to it with an overwhelming majority.

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